

# LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL)

Newsletter and Journal of Te Hao Nui—Launch Out Formation Programme  
Archdiocese of Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand

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Welcome to the May issue for 2025!

It feels surreal to release this issue in a post-Francis Church. The current cohort of Launch Out Candidates, including myself, began our journey during Pope Francis' papacy. In many ways, our formation during this time has been profoundly influenced by his leadership.

Coincidentally, the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Easter—Good Shepherd Sunday—speaks deeply to the leadership of Pope Francis. **Rutger Keijser** leads our gospel reflection, connecting the themes this day represents: the transition in the Church as we await a new pope, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and the call for Christian Unity. All these elements converge in our collective pilgrimage, a journey marked by hope.

**Jude McKee**, a senior Candidate completing her *Te Hāo Nui* journey this year, offers a powerful reflection on what 'pastoral leadership' means to her. Drawing from her ministry at St. Theresa's in Plimmerton, her theological studies, and life experience, Jude distills her leadership philosophy into 12 guiding practices. At its heart, her approach underscores the importance of walking alongside others—listening, understanding, and nurturing their growth.

In recent months, the weight of global politics and current events had left me feeling despondent. That is, until I came across a quote from Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "Reality has its limits; imagination is boundless." It reminded me of an article I wrote years ago on Walter Brueggemann's concept of *Prophetic Imagination*. In this issue, I revisit this powerful idea to explore a model of pastoral leadership rooted in our Christian tradition—one that can help us navigate the challenges of our time with vision, faith, and authenticity.

As a tribute to Pope Francis, **Bridget Taumoepeau** offers a summary of the attributes and titles given to this beloved shepherd. Her reflection reminds us of the deep well of pastoral wisdom Francis has shared with the world.

Lastly, we are grateful to Deacon **Philip Mauel** from the Archdiocese of Luxembourg for curating a rich set of resources for the Easter season—tools that can guide our spiritual journeys during this time of renewal.

We may be living through "interesting times"—a phrase that has often been overused, yet still rings true. Many of the events unfolding in the world are beyond our control, but we are not without hope. Hope is not bound by the limitations of our reality, nor by the constraints of our imagination. It is a hope that transcends—boundless and ever-present. It comes from the very vision of God for humanity, the same vision that calls the Church into being. We, as a people made for hope, continue our journey forward, trusting that it is through hope that we find the strength to meet the challenges ahead.

Maya Bernardo,  
Migrant Ministry & Formation Coordinator

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*When he had finished eating, he said to Simon,  
"Launch out into the deep water and let down your  
nets for a catch".*

*Luke 5: 4*

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Visit the Te Hao Nui-Launch Out webpage: [https://  
www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/launch-out-formation  
-programme/](https://www.wn.catholic.org.nz/about/church-mission/launch-out-formation-programme/)

## Let us be pilgrims of hope

4th Sunday of Easter, [John 10:27-30](#)

Rutger Keijser  
Launch Out Candidate

We live in uncertain yet exciting times. As I write this, we are still in the Easter Octave, the period of eight days following Easter Sunday. This year, the Easter Octave was rocked by the passing away of our beloved Pope Francis, causing me and many other Catholics around the world to wonder how to hold both the sadness of his death and the joy of the Risen Christ in our hearts at the same time.

Added to this double feeling is the uncertainty associated with the *sede vacante* period we now find ourselves in, the interval between Pope Francis' death and the announcement of his successor. By the time you read this, the papal conclave will either have started or is about to commence, and it is likely that we will have a new Pope before Ascension Day (Thursday 29 May, celebrated in New Zealand on Ascension Sunday, 1 June). Until that time, we pray for a worthy successor to Francis, one that builds on his accomplishments and carries his work forward.

On Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup> of May, amidst all of this unfolding, we will also be midway through the 40-day period (Acts 1:3) between Easter and Ascension Day. Last week's Gospel reading emphasised the importance of love and service within the Christian community. Next week, Jesus will tell His followers that He will be with them only a little longer and will give us a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34).

Fittingly, today's Gospel is a message of hope. It contains one of the greatest and most compelling images of God's care and mercy: the Good Shepherd. The Gospel Acclamation (John 10:14) says "I am the good shepherd, says the Lord; I know my sheep, and mine know me." Today's Gospel affirms to us that Christ constantly watches over us and lifts us up, and at the same time invites us to listen to the Shepherd's voice.



To help us with the latter, on this Sunday we are invited to pray for vocations to the ordained life, religious life, and other ministries within the Church. The 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is both known as Good Shepherd Sunday and as the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

In his message for today's World Day of Prayer for Vocations, written from his hospital bed in March, when he probably knew that he would be with us only a little longer, Pope Francis tells us that the Lord knows the human heart and does not abandon us in our uncertainty. He wants us to know that we are loved, *called and sent as pilgrims of hope*. In his message, Pope Francis refers to the constant blare that surrounds us and prevents us from experiencing a silence that is open to God who speaks to the heart. He calls upon us to have the courage to pause and listen, and to ask God about his dreams about us. Well, do you have this courage?

I have wondered about this myself many times. What if God's dream about me is not something I fathom or feel I can deliver on? Matthew of course reminds us not to waste our talents. In 25:25 he quotes the servant saying "So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours." This Sunday, we are prompted that the Lord our Shepherd knows us, and we know Him. When Pope Francis reminds us that we are called and sent as pilgrims of hope, we are reminded once again to not hide our talents but to show up.

*Continues on Page 3*

The prologue of the ancient Rule of St Benedict begins with the invocation to "Listen and incline the ear of your heart." Today, listening with the ear of my heart takes me to Laudato Si, Pope Francis' second encyclical on care for our common home, in which he calls on all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action". In the last chapter of his book, he asks God to "show us our place in this world as channels of Your love (...) and to seize us with His power and light."

In a few weeks, Christian Unity Week will be celebrated in New Zealand. This week, starting 1 June, is a time for Catholics and Christians across other denominations to come together in prayer and reflection, working towards unity and focusing on what we share. Let us listen and let us work with our sisters and brothers in faith to find our place in this world. In the words of Archbishop Paul Martin, spoken at the end of his homily delivered during the Suffrage Mass for Pope Francis on 24 April, "Let us be Pilgrims of Hope".

*Father in heaven,  
may the faith you have given us  
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,  
and the flame of charity enkindled  
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,  
reawaken in us the blessed hope  
for the coming of your Kingdom.*

From the Jubilee Prayer (2025)

## ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **Litany of Saints-Praying for a New Pope**
  - ◇ **Singing the litany** <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/16bh8969it/>
- **Good Shepherd** music for reflection. Compiled by Ngaire Pinkham. I didn't realise how many songs have 'Feed my sheep' as titles.
  - ◇ If You Love me, Feed my Sheep--Pamela Stewart and John Purifoy <https://youtu.be/AikLe4FLZn0?si=Oc4jb2uoV1Jq2o1n>
  - ◇ If you love me feed my sheep [https://youtu.be/qcg1ea\\_5fjs?si=IKMpfEpnLP7W89tc](https://youtu.be/qcg1ea_5fjs?si=IKMpfEpnLP7W89tc)
  - ◇ Feed my Lambs by John Angotto [https://youtu.be/nXwhYefjiK0?si=7v-2\\_ZyXqqhP4VDi](https://youtu.be/nXwhYefjiK0?si=7v-2_ZyXqqhP4VDi)
  - ◇ Feed my Sheep by Josh Henn <https://youtu.be/J8WBsvwBvCo?si=eOzH7tqeEoeLNFv5>
  - ◇ Feed My Sheep--Don Francisco--folk song style <https://youtu.be/gmdk3iZqkr8?si=ccxnimzPJsTABkmf>
  - ◇ Do you Really Love Me?-Cary Landry [https://youtu.be/bLidj2w1dE8?si=FBq\\_7VzgM36OqtAe](https://youtu.be/bLidj2w1dE8?si=FBq_7VzgM36OqtAe)
  - ◇ Peter Do You Love Me <https://youtu.be/xyYB2LQlvCo?si=1UV9DSAwBYCqmvjb>
- **Free Online Copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church** <https://usccb.cld.bz/Catechism-of-the-Catholic-Church/>





I have been asked to write an exposé on my experience of 'doing' pastoral leadership and my roles in the parish of St Theresa's Plimmerton. I'm not sure I feel like I "do" pastoral leadership. I definitely have an opinion that pastoral leadership is a gift, and a gift that we must not hide. I think more of 'living' pastorally in order to lead well.

*"No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before*

*others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:15-16).*

My lamp was lit a long time ago, but I probably wasn't truly giving light to all in the house until one day I was asked if I would be an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. I was assured I was 'holy' enough despite my doubts!

It's difficult to put into a few words my journey at St Theresa's but there is no doubt in my mind that my Launch Out Formation has been a great asset to the parish and to myself. The 'girl' who entered the Launch Out Formation programme in 2019 has changed. Her love of God and her yearning to work in the parish has not changed but certainly her 'pastoral leadership' view and actions have changed.

Aside from now being a well-formed and informed Catholic I find myself more gentle, more tolerant, and more patient. The external influences that God placed in my path have had as much an impression on who I am today as have the studies, the reflection days, retreat weekends, prayer days, and the learning days of my Launch Out Formation.

Looking after a person who had a degenerative disorder, and another suffering from dementia, my parents, was not a plan I had for my life. Visiting our local hospital with Holy Communion on Sundays was not a ministry I thought I would ever take up – and yet after some 10+ years I continue to find peace and joy in this ministry. God has plans, and they are good plans that give hope and a future. And the pastoral care opportunities that he has placed in my path have certainly influenced who I am today.

It is God working through us. It is quite humbling. I am mostly awe-struck by what I manage to do and say - because I know that it is a much higher power than myself at work.

There is a song we often sing at the children's liturgies I prepare for the young people at St Theresa's Primary School in Plimmerton. The lyrics tell us we have holy hands – He's given us holy hands – He works through these hands – and so these hands are holy. These lyrics describe my view of pastoral leadership. If there was another verse it might say – He's given us holy tongues – He speaks through these tongues – and so these tongues are holy!

Pope Francis has spoken of servant leadership. He invites us to take our example from Jesus. If we let our light shine with compassion and kindness we can reach out as Jesus did. We can help people to truly encounter Jesus with our pastoral leadership gifts.

*"Indeed with his word and example, as we know, he taught very different things about authority. He spoke about it in terms of self-sacrifice, humble service, maternal and paternal tenderness toward people, especially [toward] those most in need."*

Pope Francis Vatican City, Nov 10, 2024

David Horner, Executive Director for Equipped for Life, a ministry established to equip men and women to grow in Christ and learn to excel in their ministry callings wrote a book *Challenges Pastors Face : Overcome Common Struggles and Thrive in Ministry, 2019*. The book noted that the best leaders understood the importance of humble servanthood. Horner included in his book 12 practical suggestions so that leaders could demonstrate true humility. When I think about my own ministry I too have 12 practical suggestions ...

## 12 PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR PASTORAL LEADERS

1. Get to know the people you are walking with. *To serve well - know people well.*
2. Efficiency is not always the best means of ministry. *To serve well – be patient.*
3. There is no wasted time in ministry. *To serve well – slow down – even stop sometimes.*
4. Personal journeys and challenges help us grow. *To serve well - see the nourishment you actually receive through personal challenges.*
5. Keep it simple. *To serve well - don't over-complicate anything with big words.*
6. Remember – God is in charge. *To serve well - be prepared to move in God's time and direction.*
7. God makes us be more than we can ever be. *To serve well - God will equip you with wisdom and knowledge. Let God make you be the person God wants you to be.*
8. God is a God of surprises. *To serve well - say yes to God's prodding, to the nudging.*
9. Think outside the box. *To serve well - we need to stand up. Don't dwell on problems – focus on solutions.*
10. Build relationships with schools. *To serve well - know that all parishioners, including the children matter.*
11. Acknowledge whose shoulders you stand on. *To serve well - always be grateful from whence you came.*
12. Be welcoming and aware. *To serve well - guard and protect everyone in the pews, in the homes we visit, and don't forget the priest.*

You don't need to be a great theologian to understand these suggestions. You don't even have to look past the gospels to know that these are suggesting we live and act, and lead, Christ-like. And if we want to be a good leader these humble actions create in us a vessel through which God can work and make his light shine.

So for me, in my ministry at St Theresa's Parish and School in Plimmerton, knowing the people and the children, sharing my gifts with them and listening to their stories, all lead to a joy of celebrating not only my own faith, but also all the learnings that I have been blessed to receive – both the outside influences and the academic studies.

To practice servant leadership pastorally be gentle, tolerant, patient, compassionate, kind and tender. This is how I try to lead in the parish and the school in Plimmerton, and always in my dealings with my dear Mum and the patients at Kenepuru Hospital. In my daily living I aim to live these traits, and I know that it is these traits that allow God to truly lead pastorally among the people I meet.

Image: Serve First picture downloaded from <https://richbrownforewords.wordpress.com/2012/09/20/9232012-be-servants-of-all/>



## Pastoral Resources for the Easter Season (Paschaltide)

Below are online resources that **Philip Mauel** compiled for LOL. Philip is a guest deacon from the Archdiocese of Luxembourg. He joins the Church Mission team and helps around in the various ministries.

### "What is Easter?" USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

An overview of the Easter season from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. This page explains the theological significance of Paschaltide (*the 50 days of joy from the Resurrection to the coming of the Holy Spirit*) and its key celebrations. It covers the Octave of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, the Ascension, and Pentecost, providing some great scriptural and liturgical context. Pastoral ministers will find solid Catholic teaching here. It's reliable. It's official. And it's way more clear and way more complete than what you'll find almost anywhere else.

<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-worship/liturgical-year/easter>

### "Easter" Resources / Loyola Press

A collection of resources for the Easter season that is extensive and that combines both background and practical tools. Loyola Press (*a Jesuit publisher*) provides not just insights into the resurrection but also offers a multiplicity of resources directed at different ministries. On this page, you'll find both family-friendly and parish resources: articles explaining the meaning of Easter, lesson plans for children and teens, downloadable activities and crafts, ideas for prayer and reflection, and even an "Easter Is a Verb" video about living out the resurrection. It's an excellent one-stop resource to "learn more about Easter and find Easter activities" for various uses in the weeks leading up to and following Easter Sunday.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/liturgical-year/easter/>

### Easter Season 2024 / Diocese of Little Rock (Arkansas)

A diocesan resource hub for Easter Time that manages to serve as both a background and diverse pastoral tools hub. This webpage (*2024 edition*), introduces Paschaltide with quotes from Scripture and Church teaching, noting that "*the Easter season, known as Easter Time, is celebrated for 50 days*" and culminates in Ascension and Pentecost. It then lists and links to a variety of practical resources. 50 ways to celebrate this season with kids; four not-to-miss, sustainable ways to keep the adult faith community rejoicing well into Acts of the Apostles territory. This page is steeped in Catholic tradition and overflows with usable insights.

<https://www.dolr.org/easter-season>

### Easter Season Resources / Strong Catholic Family Faith

A rich Easter-season content oriented toward families, children, and youth ministry. This collaborative site (*run by diocesan faith formation leaders*) gathers prayers, hymns, crafts, lesson ideas, and activities to help families live the 50 days of Easter at home and in parish life. You'll find links to creative projects (resurrection crafts, Easter egg hunt and 'Alleluia' games), printable prayer services and colouring pages, Catholic customs explained (like blessing Easter foods, Divine Mercy devotions), and teen-friendly activities to keep older youth engaged. It's an invaluable resource for parish family nights, religious educators, or anyone looking to make Easter faith-filled and fun for all ages.

<https://www.catholicfamilyfaith.org/easter-season-resources.html>

### "Season of Easter" Overview / CatholicCulture.org

This page provides an authentically Catholic perspective on the celebration not just of Easter Sunday but of the ongoing Easter season, 50 days long, from Easter to Pentecost. It notes the importance, both ancient and modern, of the celebrations as including not just the highlight of the Paschal Candle the whole way through to Pentecost but also as limiting penitential practices to only the level of what is normal for a Sunday, since we're right in the middle of Eastertide.

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/liturgicalyear/activities/view.cfm?id=1233>

## MAY

5 Archbishop Paul Martin, SM

5 Cardinal John Dew

12 Mary Jackson Kay, RC

27 Mary Ann Greaney





## Drawing on the wisdom of Prophetic Imagination

These are interesting times. I say that as both as a description and a cynical thinking of my gloomy outlook of current global events. The news says it all, I don't need to detail the events that challenge our sense of hope. The late Pope Francis couldn't have picked a better theme for this year's Jubilee.

The book on *Prophetic Imagination*, 2001 by Walter Brueggemann has been a source of inspiration as I reflect on my response to the world's challenges. It's a theological classic and a good read for those in pastoral ministry. Brueggemann coined the word '*prophetic imagination*' which drew upon the wisdom of biblical prophets as models of addressing the socio-economic-political malaise of our time. He posits that '*the prophetic needs to be imaginative because it is urgently out and beyond the ordinary and reasonable*'. His entry point was the Old Testament's Exodus, with the story of Israel's oppression under the pharaoh and how God used Moses to deliver them out of Egypt into a forty year long journey towards the promise land. In the Exodus narrative, the Jewish people have been in Egypt for 430 years, since the time of Joseph who brought his family to Egypt from Canaan to save them from famine.

Prevost (1996) defines the biblical prophet as a person who 'speaks before the community and confronts them with the demands of the covenant'. Unlike diviners and sages, they do not read the heavens or foretell the future. Instead, they read the signs of the times and articulate God's vision for the future.

Brueggemann named the 'dominant culture' as the oppressive context that keeps people enslaved and in despair. It is a wearied culture incapable of being energised by the new promises of God. He outlines three characteristics of the dominant culture:

**Economics of affluence** when wealth is centred on a few and are not shared democratically.

**Politics of oppression** in which the cries of the marginalised are not heard or are dismissed as the noise of crooks and traitors.

**Religion of Immanence** when God and His temple is part of the political landscape, in which the sovereignty of God is subordinated to the purposes of the king.

We can see the same dominant culture at play in today's world, and the behaviour of the rich and powerful, who after a time, as Brueggemann pointed out, become *illiterate in the language of hope*. In the Exodus story, the dominant culture is represented by the pharaoh and the ruling class, who have numbed the Israelites' connection to their heritage as God's chosen people. The numbness is a way to cope with the pain of oppression. The numbness is outwardly manifested as denial of their very identity and the reality of hope. Moses not only had to challenge the powerful pharaoh but had to cut through the long intergenerational numbness that beset the Israelites. The famous ten apocalyptic signs (locust, blood in the river...death of firstborns) were not just for the pharaoh to convince him to release the Israelites, but also for the Israelites, to remind them of who God is.

In prophetic imagination, God calls on prophets to challenge individuals, communities, and institutions to 'nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness' that is alternative to the dominant culture. Imagining and articulating the prophetic alternative is the mission of prophets. Brueggemann suggests that prophetic imagination is not the same dreaming or visioning, when he said:

*"The prophet does not ask if the vision can be implemented, for questions of implementation are of no consequence until the vision can be imagined. The imagination comes before the implementation".*



A prophet proclaims a bold imagination of God's vision, and puts faith in God, who "makes all things possible for its own time" (Eccles 3:11). The Israelites' numb consciousness has suddenly revitalised and opens to the 'emergence of amazement.' Poetically, Brueggemann writes the prophet makes the 'hopefulness of singing' happen again.

Brueggemann offers three tasks of prophetic imagination :

1. Offer symbols that are adequate to confront the horror and massiveness of the experience that evokes numbness and requires denial.
2. To bring to public expression those very fears and terrors that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply that we do not know they are there.
3. To speak metaphorically about the real deathliness that hovers over us and gnaws within us and to speak neither in rage nor with cheap grace, but with the candour born of anguish and passion.

Pope Francis tick all three boxes with his use of ordinary metaphors in phrasing his provocative message, phrases such as 'the smell of the sheep'. Below is a quote that I think gives a good example:

*"I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars. You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else". (National Catholic Reporter, 2013)*

Something closer to the story of Exodus and directly calling out the economics of affluence, politics of oppression and inadvertently, the religion of immanence:

*"The worship of the golden calf of old has found a new and heartless image in the cult of money and the dictatorship of an economy which is faceless and lacking any truly human goal" (The Washington Post, 2013).*

The prophet is not just an orator, but the mouthpiece of God. How one renders oneself open to be God's mouthpiece is another topic. One thing is clear, the words of the prophets (and that of Pope Francis) are energized by the Holy Spirit. Brueggemann did underpin one aspect of the prophet's journey—that pain and suffering are integral to their prophecy. Brueggemann brings the wisdom of the New Testament into dialogue with the prophetic message of the Old Testament when he said:

*"the Cross is the assurance that effective prophetic criticism is not done by an outsider but always by one who embraces the grief, enters into the death and knows the pain of the criticised one".*

Finally, prophets are not just individuals but collectives or organisations, such as schools and parishes. The ontological identity and mission of the Church, in parts and as a whole, is prophetic. Thus, we, in pastoral ministries are called to be *prophets for prophets*, who are sent to shake, arouse, intrigue, provoke, pronounce, act, and to make hope sing again.

Maya Bernardo  
Coordinator, Migrant Ministry and Formation

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# The many names of Francis

Bridget Taumoepeau  
Pastoral Mentor



From Ashwim Vashwani <https://unsplash.com/photos/pope-francis-55k45BgfUF8>

Some time ago I collected various attributes of Pope Francis, and I came across them again recently. I think it is interesting to ponder on this long list, especially in this time of mourning for our beloved Holy Father. There is no doubt that Francis has greatly influenced the Church throughout the world, and each of us personally.

Some of the attributes I have gathered:

**Simplicity** in his way of life and in the liturgy

**Humility**, including the ability to apologise when he was wrong.

**Accessible**, sometimes colourful, language.

A sense of **humour**. Promotion of **art, music and literature**.

Great ability to **teach** – both spoken, as in the audiences and homilies, and written, as well as by example.

**Pastoral** in his approach and language- which is **non-judgmental**, emphasising **mercy** and forgiveness.

**Inclusive**, especially of groups who have felt marginalised.

Exudes **positivity** with **hope** and **joy**.

As well as being called Pontiff, Francis was bestowed many titles, not so much of status, but largely due to the impact of his leadership on the Church:

Advocate for: **decentralisation; ecumenism; inter-faith relations; collegiality; synodality; anti-clericalism; the laity; servant leadership; inclusion;** and our **lead pilgrim** in the Church's pilgrimage of hope.

Courageous communicator to **address difficult issues** – the sexual abuse crisis; financial corruption; the importance of the Church as an instrument of **peace, justice and unity**, rather than divisiveness; officials do not exist for their own sake, but to spread **the message of the Gospel**; the use of **dialogue; doing away with 'business as usual'** or 'we have always done it this way' or clinging to old structures; the use of **discernment** rather than confrontation;

A theologian for our time – a **Christocentric** Church; devotion to **Mary**; devotional **piety**; the importance of **scripture; Vatican II** as the irreversible basis for the Church's current pathway; **allowing discussion**, rather than suppression of new theological ideas.

In short, a **Reformer**.

Some questions for reflection:

*If you were to add to these names, what would they be?*

*How has the pontificate of Pope Francis and his attributes challenged you, helped you reflect on your spiritual life?*

In this Jubilee Year when we are all called to be Pilgrims of Hope, let us thank Pope Francis for his leadership, guidance and example.

He, who always asked for our prayers, is now in heaven advocating for us.